

Marijuana and Youth

A survey conducted by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission for Youths in 2012, measured marijuana use by teens at least 30 days prior to this survey.

- 30-day use by teens increased from 2008 to 2012 by 14.4%, although there was a slight decrease between 2010-2012.
- Marijuana and ecstasy were the only two out of 16 illegal substances surveyed for which teen use increased.
- 2012 was the first time in history that 30-day marijuana use surpassed 30-day cigarette use.
- 11.6% of youths obtained marijuana from a medical marijuana card holder.



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Marijuana Fast Facts



POTENCY IS ON THE RISE

- Between 1993 and 2009, the average concentration of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in confiscated marijuana jumped from 3.4 to 10%.
- This increase in potency may account for the increase in emergency room visits and increased risk of addiction.
- Between 1992 and 2006, hospital and rehabilitation center admission rates for minors dependent on marijuana soared by 188%.

RISKS ARE GREAT

- Marijuana alters the brain's neurons causing short-term and long-term negative effects.
- THC over-activates the brain's endocannabinoid system, causing the "high" and interfering with the neural communication network that plays an important role in normal brain development and function.
- Marijuana's effect on the brain leads to risky behaviors, distorted perceptions, impaired coordination, difficulty with thinking and problem solving, learning difficulties and memory loss impairments.
- Regular use by youths can cause greater harm to the brain, lowering IQ scores 7-8 points; use before age 15 increases the likelihood of mental illness, such as schizophrenia.

MARIJUANA: THE DRUG

Marijuana is a Schedule I drug. Schedule I drugs are defined by the United States Controlled Substance Act and are subject to strict controls set by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Marijuana is considered a Schedule I drug because it has a "high potential for abuse" and may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence — 21 U.S.C 812 (b)(2)

RISK OF ABUSE OR DEPENDENCY

- In 2010, 17.4 million Americans ages 12 and older were marijuana users; 4.5 million users were classified as marijuana dependent or abusers.
- Marijuana is addictive. Approximately 9% of users become addicted with an increase in addiction among young users.
- Long-term users trying to quit report withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, sleeplessness, decreased appetite and anxiety.

Treatment Statistics

Drug treatment for people with marijuana dependency issues increased 21% from 2000 to 2010 (127 per 100,000 compared to 105 per 100,000)

3/4 of those were males with an average age of 25.

Of all the drug admissions, those with primarily marijuana issues increased to 18% in 2010 compared to 14% in 2000

MARIJUANA AND DRIVING

Driving under the influence of marijuana is dangerous and causes avoidable vehicle accidents. Research shows that users/drivers have slower reaction times and impaired judgment, leading to difficulty responding to signals and sounds.

The skills needed to drive safely (alertness, concentration, coordination, judgment, and reactions time) are controlled by the same parts of the brain affected by THC. Driving under the influence of marijuana IS illegal.

Consequences for driving under the influence of marijuana include loss of drivers license, fines and jail time.

MARIJUANA AND INCARCERATION

In Arizona, convictions for possession of marijuana (without a medical marijuana card) is a criminal offense and may be charged either as a misdemeanor or felony.

The amount of marijuana a suspect is caught with will determine the level of the charge.



Six months to four years is the range of incarceration times for possession charges, with a fine range of \$750—\$2000, depending on the severity of the charge.